

## Local Teamwork Achieves FFA Dream

Dreams come true when people come together and work for a common cause. It has long been a dream of Agricultural Education instructor Marc Beitia to one day provide a learning land laboratory for American Falls students. When the new American Falls High School was completed and opened its doors during the fall of 2001, ten vacant acres sat next to the Agricultural facility. This land has since been turned into the land laboratory that Beitia wished for. Crops of wheat have been produced and participating students learned the old-fashioned technique of irrigating with hand lines and good hard work. While the hand lines worked fine and students did not mind getting their hands and boots dirty, they did not provide the state-of-the-art technology used by so many agricultural producers today. Things changed when Beitia was approached this past spring with a proposal he could not refuse.

Through the efforts of Chuck Buchta and Clay Hales, Knudsen Irrigation donated the state-of-the-art Valley irrigation system that Beitia had only dreamed of a few months prior. Once the proposed project was approved by the American Falls School Board of Trustees the project hit the ground running. Laser measuring equipment was brought to the High School site in mid June and things started happening quickly after that. While Knudsen irrigation donated their newest most up-to-date pivot with all the bells and whistles, other local businesses donated to the project and its success as well.

Shortly after the measurements were taken, the other area businesses started to pitch in. Scott Horrocks and Pocatello Ready Mix donated the majority of the concrete for the pivot pad. Pete Ramsey of Ramsey Electric, donated labor to the wiring of the 480-volt three-phase power supply, electrical disconnect at the Ag Building, and the pivot. Greg Cannell and Lloyde Herbst of G&L Metal Fab Inc. donated the welding necessary to complete the project. Travis Mills, a former AFHS Ag student, of Double M Ranch and Ag, donated part of the mainline that was used to transfer water to the pivot. Tyler and Bret Haskett, Tyler a former AFHS Ag student, of Native Rehab and Fence, donated the labor for the security fence to be built around the pivot point and pad. Without the generous support and volunteerism of all of these community members this project would not have been possible.

Through these donations to the Agricultural Education program new things are possible. It is now the goal of the Agricultural program and its FFA Chapter to be able to really use the land laboratory as a state-of-the-art teaching tool and to secure a portion of the profits that may be generated from future crops to establish a scholarship program for civic-minded students who are genuinely interested in pursuing a career in or directly related to the Agricultural industries that have made this dream a reality.

Tanner Funk, a current student at American Falls High School and a member of its Agricultural Education program and FFA Chapter is currently raising spring wheat on the land laboratory. Next year he and other students plan to raise the first potato crop from the acreage. Mr. Beitia plans to team students with an agricultural background with those who may not have the background but are interested in pursuing a career in or related to agricultural in these real life learning situations.

Mr. Beitia and his Agricultural Education students would like to sincerely thank all those who made this dream a reality: Chuck Buchta and Clay Hales of Knudsen Irrigation; Dr. Ron Bolinger School District Superintendent; Randy Maughan, High School Principal; John Robinson, School District Maintenance Supervisor; Jim Tiede and the other members of the American Falls School Board of Trustees; Scott Horrocks of Pocatello Ready Mix; Pete Ramsey, Blaine Udy, and John Hunt of Ramsey Electric; Greg Cannell and Lloyd Herbst G&L Metal Fab Inc.; Travis and Mark Mills of Double M Ranch and Ag; Tyler and Brett Haskett of Native Rehab and Fence; Terrell Sorensen of the Falls Irrigation District; and finally Monte and Tanner Funk for their efforts on behalf of the entire program. Indeed dreams do come true!

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